HEALTHtoday

A publication of the Albany County Department of Health

Donate LIFE!

The Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH) is partnering with the *Hortense and Louis Rubin Community Health Fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region* and the *Center for Donation and Transplant* to carry out an organ donation campaign through December 31, 2018. Our goal was to have an additional 500 Albany County residents sign up to be organ donors by the end of 2018. From April through November, the number of registered donors in Albany County increased by 7,002 people! Although we exceeded our goal, every donor counts! You can help by spreading awareness and registering as a New York State organ and tissue donor at donatelife.ny.gov.

As a registered organ donor, you can save up to 8 lives through organ donation and enhance up to 50 lives through donation of eyes and tissues. On average, 19 people die each day in the United States from lack of organs available for a transplant. In New York State, about 10,000 people are waiting for a transplant.

Common Questions & Myths

Will I get less medical care if I am a donor?

No. Organ donation is considered only after everything has been done to save the life of the patient.

Does my age or health history matter?

People of all ages (at least 16 years old) and health can sign up to donate.

What about religious beliefs?

All major religions fully support organ and tissue donation and consider donation an act of charity and love.

Will my family have to pay for the cost of the donation?

No. The donor's family is never billed for any costs relating to organ donation.

Who will get my organs?

The national transplant waiting list is based on blood type, current health, location, tissue type, length of time on the list, and medical urgency. Gender, race, and money do not influence selection.

It is easy to sign up! You can register online at donatelife.ny.gov or at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles.

All About Opioids

From 1999 to 2016, prescription opioids given in the U.S. quadrupled. Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death for Americans under age 50.

What are opioids?

Opioids are a medicine that doctors sometimes give patients for average-to-strong pain. Some types of opioid include oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, fentanyl, and methadone. A doctor may give an opioid medication after a surgery, injury, for ongoing pain, or for health problems like cancer[1].

What are the dangers?

Use of opioids comes with a risk of abuse and addiction in some people. Once a person becomes addicted to opioids, it can be hard to quit[2]. Using an opioid medication in the wrong way may cause an overdose, which causes a person to stop breathing and can lead to death. Sharing opioid medication or not storing medication in a safe place can put others at risk.

What is Albany County doing?

In 2016, Albany County Executive Daniel P. McCoy created the Albany County Opioid Task Force including leaders in public health, public safety, mental health, and the community. The Task Force helps people who are touched by opioid addiction and overdose. Goals of the Task Force are to:

- Offer education, prevention, and public outreach;
- Increase people's ability to get care; and
- Improve information sharing.

The Albany County Department of Health partnered with local independent pharmacies and started Project Orange in 2016 to tell residents about the importance of safe use, storage, and disposal of opioid medicines. Customers at these pharmacies receive a FREE prescription mail back envelope to get rid of opioid medicines, or can return them at a prescription drop box location.

In order to improve people's ability to get naloxone, a life-saving medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose[3], the Albany County Department of Health offers free naloxone classes. People can attend these on the first Tuesday of each month, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., at 175 Green Street, Albany, New York 12202.

OPIOID OVERDOSES
On the Rise in the United States

30% INCREASE in emergency department visits for opioid overdoses
July 2016–September 2017

Increases were greater in adults **ages 25+**

DO YOUR PART TO PREVENT OPIOID OVERDOSES

Learn about opioid risks

Store prescription opioids securely

Find out how naloxone can save lives

Contact SAMHSA helpline at 1-800-662-HELP

Call 911 if you need immediate care

Learn more at **www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-overdoses**

Around **40%** of all opioid overdose deaths involve a **prescription opioid**.

115 AMERICANS die every day from an **opioid overdose** (that includes prescription opioids and heroin.)

1 "Opioid Overdose," August 29, 2017, https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/opioids/prescribed.html.
2 "Addressing the Opioid Epidemic in New York State," August 29, 2017, https://www.health.ny.gov/community/opioid_epidemic/.
3 "Expanding Naloxone use could reduce drug overdose deaths and save lives," April 24, 2015, https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0424-naloxone.html

Lost Mothers

The last person you would expect to die while giving birth is a mother.

Every year in the U.S., 700 to 900 women die from pregnancy or childbirth-related causes. Non-Hispanic black women in the U.S. have maternal deaths at a rate three to four times that of non-Hispanic white women, a racial inequity that is seen across many maternal and infant outcomes. In Albany County, the 3-year average maternal death rate (from causes related to pregnancy or within 42 days of end of pregnancy) has regularly been higher than the New York State Prevention Agenda (PA) goal.

While maternal death is far more common among African Americans, low-income women, and in rural areas, pregnancy and childbirth complications affect women of every race and ethnicity, education, and income level. They die from bleeding, heart problems, or infection. In a recent report by the CDC Foundation, nearly 60 percent of such deaths could be avoided: https://www.cdcfoundation.org/building-us-capacity-review-and-prevent-maternal-deaths

The reasons for higher maternal deaths are many. New mothers are older than they used to be, with more complicated medical histories. Half of pregnancies in the U.S. are not planned; therefore many women don't address health issues beforehand. Greater occurrence of C-sections leads to more life-threatening complications. The confusing health care system makes it harder for new mothers, especially those without good insurance, to get the care they need.

Earlier this year, the Albany County Department of Health hosted a "listening session" with people from the community to talk about personal challenges of pregnancy. People who attended shared their thoughts and experiences about the health care system, doctors, their community and families, and other causes of pregnancy complications.

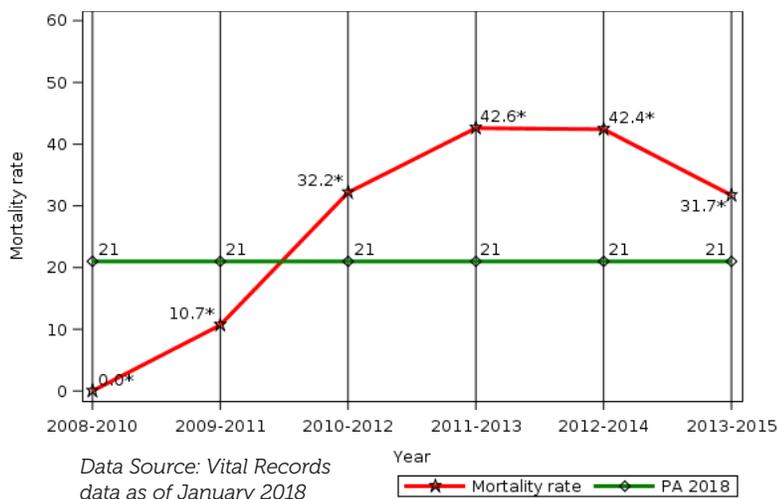To improve health for women of reproductive age, consider the following:

- Plan pregnancy with your partner.
- Seek prenatal care and follow medical advice.
- Take care of yourself.
- Find ways to reduce stress.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Don't drink, use drugs, or smoke.
- Get support before, during, and after pregnancy from family and friends.

Albany County Department of Health community health workers assist women of childbearing age to find health and social supports. In addition, Albany County Department of Health public health nurses provide home visits, health information, and linkages to medical care for women, infants, children, and families.

For more information on these services, call the Albany County Single Point of Entry at (518) 447-7777.

Each maternal death is one too many.

Albany County - Maternal death rate per 100,000 births

Mortality rate (y-axis)

- 2008-2010: 0.0*, PA 2018: 21
- 2009-2011: 10.7*, PA 2018: 21
- 2010-2012: 32.2*, PA 2018: 21
- 2011-2013: 42.6*, PA 2018: 21
- 2012-2014: 42.4*, PA 2018: 21
- 2013-2015: 31.7*, PA 2018: 21

Year

Mortality rate — PA 2018

Data Source: Vital Records data as of January 2018

Help Protect Your Community!

Join the Albany County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), a group of volunteers that are registered and ready to assist the County in a public health emergency, such as a disease outbreak.

Individuals with medical training and those with non-medical backgrounds are needed! To learn more about volunteering with the Albany County MRC, visit www.RegisteredandReady.com or e-mail BeReady@albanycounty.com for a free brochure!

Albany County Department of Health

Mission Statement

The Albany County Department of Health strives to protect and promote the health of individuals, families, and communities.

We work with many community partners to offer a variety of programs and services to achieve our mission and accomplish the following: prevent communicable and chronic diseases, injuries, and disabilities; protect against environmental hazards that threaten health and safety; promote the health and wellness of our citizens and our communities; and prepare for and respond to public health emergencies.

Albany County does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, veteran status or marital status in its programs and activities.

Services Available

- Clinical Services
- Communicable Disease Program
- Environmental Health Services
- Health Education and Wellness
- HIV/AIDS/STD Education
- HIV Testing and Counseling
- Maternal and Child Health Programs
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program

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ALBANY COUNTY *Cares* about our health

Daniel P. McCoy
County Executive